

HOMILY – 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER “B” 4-15-2018

“Lord, let your face shine upon us.” This response from the Responsorial Psalm for our liturgy today got me thinking about how our facial expressions can often speak a thousand words. A smile, a frown, a lack of eye contact or the rolling of eyes tells us a great deal about what another may be thinking. Often these non-verbal facial expressions have a message. “I am so glad to see you, I am in a bad mood, what do you want, I am busy, I hope this is important or really, do we have to talk about this.”

I wonder what kinds of facial expressions Jesus witnessed when he appeared before the disciples in today’s Gospel. I’m guessing he saw some of them with their mouths wide open in shock. I imagine others lowered their heads in shame and embarrassment. There were probably others who expressed by their eyes how much they wanted to be forgiven.

How about Jesus, what did his facial expression say to the disciples? If I went to my cell phone and could pick an emoji that would best express the look on the face of Jesus, it would be the one with a big smile. Jesus had to be glad to be reunited again with his closest followers. He had to smile seeing the looks on their faces. He had to smile to see their relief at seeing him alive. He had to smile, knowing these stumbling and weakened followers would become his instruments for spreading his message of forgiveness and hope in the early church.

When we think of Jesus in our thoughts and prayers, what kind of facial expression do we picture Jesus having? Is he frowning, rolling his eyes, looking away from us? Or do we see Jesus smiling at us?

In the Gospel Jesus greets the disciples with words of peace and the question **“Why are you troubled?”** Jesus does not want us to be troubled, he wants us to be filled with peace. In your prayers and meditation during this week, reflect on these beautiful words found in the Responsorial Psalm. As you do, experience the smiling presence of Jesus who loves you.

“Lord, let your face (your smile) shine upon us.” Relieve me when I am in distress; have pity on me, and hear my prayer. The Lord will hear me when I call upon him. The Lord will put gladness into my heart. As soon as I lie down, I fall peacefully asleep, for you alone are Lord, bring security to my dwelling.

Closing Story

A woman was hurrying to the pharmacy because her mom needed medication. She jumped out of the car, then realized that she had locked her keys inside. She was very frustrated, so she looked around and found an old, rusty coat hanger and tried to open it. She couldn’t do it. And so she prayed, “Lord, help me. My mom needs meds, I’ve got to get home, it’s cold out here.”

And so just at that moment a great big Harley-Davidson pulls up and a big, brute guy - big beard, tattoos all over, leather jacket - just a tough looking dude ...He says, “Can I help you Ma’am?”

She said: "Yes, I locked my keys in the car. Do you know how to use this?" He

says “Oh, yeah!” So he gets the hanger, pops open the car door, and she says, “Oh, thank you, thank you. I prayed to God that He’d send me a kind man like you.” And the guy says, “Uh, Ma’am, I’m not exactly kind. I just got out of jail for car theft.”

And she said “Oh, thank God even more. He sent me a professional!”